U.S. Crop Production Highlights

The following information was released by USDA's Agricultural Statistics Board on August 11, 2000. Forecasts refer to August 1.

Corn production is forecast at 10.4 billion bushels, up 10 percent (%) from last year and up 6% from 1998. Yields are expected to average 141.9 bushels per acre, up 8.1 bushels from last year. If realized, this would be the largest production and highest yield since corn estimates began in 1866. Grain harvested is estimated at 73.1 million acres, down 29,000 acres from June, but up 4% from 1999.

Soybean production is forecast at a record-high 2.99 billion bushels, up 13% from 1999 and 9% above the previous record of 2.74 billion bushels set in 1998. Yields are expected to average 40.7 bushels per acre, up 4.2 bushels from 1999. If realized, this would be the second-highest yield behind the 1994 record of 41.4 bushels per acre. Acreage for harvest is estimated at a record 73.5 million acres, up 1% from 1999 and unchanged from the June estimate.

All cotton production is forecast at 19.2 million 480-pound bales, up 13% from 1999. The yield is expected to average 648 pounds per harvested acre, up 41 pounds from last year. Drought conditions have resulted in abandoned acreage and reduced yields in parts of the Southeast and Texas. Producers expect to harvest 14.2 million acres, 6% above last year. Upland cotton accounts for 14.0 million harvested acres, 7% above 1999. American-Pima harvested acreage totals 181,000 acres, 37% less than 1999. Upland cotton production is forecast at 18.7 million bales, a 15% increase from 1999. American-Pima production is forecast at 419 thousand bales.

All wheat production is placed at 2.26 billion bushels, up 1% from the July forecast, but down 2% from 1999. The yield is forecast at 41.6 bushels per acre, up 0.4 bushel from last month.

(Continued from front cover)

East of the Delta, heat (up to 4°F above normal) offset the beneficial effects of scattered showers, except in a few areas near the **Gulf and southern Atlantic Coasts**. Meanwhile, cooler weather arrived along the **West Coast** and heavy seasonal showers returned to parts of **Arizona** and **New Mexico**. Elsewhere in the **West**, however, very hot, dry conditions maintained heavy irrigation requirements and contributed to significant wildfire activity. In contrast, heavy rain slowed fieldwork and caused localized flooding in the **Northeast**, where temperatures averaged near normal.

Although cooler air arrived in the **West Coast States** and overspread the **Northwest** toward week's end, several impressive heat-related streaks continued across the **Intermountain West**. Through Saturday, **Grand Junction, CO** noted 27 consecutive days (July 18 - August 13) with highs at or above 95°F, eclipsing their previous record of 23 days set in July 1994. In **Utah**, **Moab** registered their 34th consecutive day of triple-digit heat on August 13, well above their July-August 1980 standard of 30 days. Unusually hot conditions also persisted on the drought-affected **central and northern High Plains**, where **Denver, CO** recorded their 50th day of 90-degree heat this year on Saturday. **Denver's** highs, which reached or exceeded 90°F on 12 of the first 13 days in August, attained the 90-degree plateau more often only in 1994 (60 days), 1978 (52 days), and 1874 (51 days). Farther north, **Helena, MT** posted their 38th consecutive day (July 7 - August 13) of 80-degree warmth on Sunday, tying their July-August 1967 record.

More than five dozen daily-record highs were set or tied from August 8-12, nearly all in the **South** or from the **High Plains westward**. In **Wyoming**, **Rawlins** tallied four consecutive records (94, 94, 93, and 95°F) from August 8-11. On Wednesday, highs in **Montana** reached 101°F in **Havre** and 98°F in **Kalispell**. Two days later, record highs included 104°F in **Bismarck, ND** and 102°F in both **Rapid City, SD** and **Worland, WY**. **McCook, NE** registered daily-record highs on Tuesday (108°F) and Saturday (106°F). Prior to August 11, **Bismarck's** only triple-digit heat since August 28, 1991, was observed on July 28 and 29, 1999. Meanwhile in the **South**, daily-record highs on Thursday included 102°F in **Jackson, MS** and 100°F at **New Orleans' Audubon Park**. A day later, **College Station, TX** noted 106°F.

Farther north and east, heat continued to avoid locations such as **Chicago and Peoria, IL**, both still awaiting their first 90-degree reading of the year. In **Indiana**, **Indianapolis** finally registered a high of 90°F on August 9, marking their latest first such observance since September 1, 1960. Meanwhile, cooler air overspread the **Northwest**, resulting in about a dozen daily-record lows. On Saturday, records included 27°F in **West Yellowstone, MT**, 35°F in **Elko, NV**, and 42°F in **Pocatello, ID**. However, the same extremely dry conditions that contributed to the low morning temperatures helped to boost Saturday's highs to 93°F (3°F above normal) in **Elko** and 92°F (4°F above normal) in **Pocatello**.

Mostly dry weather continued in the **Intermountain West**, following a dry spring and early-summer period. For example, March-July precipitation totaled 2.23 inches in **Malad City, ID**, breaking their previous record low of 2.74 inches set in 1960. Elsewhere in **Idaho**, **Hollister** received 1.91 inches, their driest March-July period since 1933. In contrast, **Binghamton, NY** continued to experience their wettest start to a year. **Binghamton's** January 1 - August 12 precipitation, 33.35 inches (149 percent of normal), surpassed their previous January-August 1994 record of 33.05 inches. At week's end, excessive rainfall struck parts of the **northern Mid-Atlantic region** and **southern New England**. In **northern New Jersey**, 24-hour rainfall on August 12-13 reached 14.11 inches in **Sparta** and 6.50 inches in **Long Valley**. Meanwhile in the **Southwest**, August 1-12 rainfall totaled 1.31 inches in Flagstaff, AZ, boosting their year-to-date precipitation to 8.38 inches (63 percent of normal).

A cool, showery pattern persisted in much of **Alaska**, holding weekly temperatures as much as 7°F below normal across interior sections. The exception was **southern Alaska**, where drier weather accompanied temperatures that rebounded to near- or above-normal levels. Meanwhile, quiet weather prevailed in **Hawaii**, where showers were generally light and confined to windward locations.